Alquitam
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464 (1431) ✓
(1432 A) ~~true~~ (?)

466 (1433) ✓
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8 5 ✓changes
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70 7 ✓
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1466 - 278
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1321
2 alterations

Caibous
967 (1302A) ✓
968 (" B) ✓
✓446 (1317A) ✓
✓ (1317B) ✓
(1317C) ✓
(1319A) ✓

839 (1321A) ✓
✓~~446~~ (1326A) ✓
✓ (1335A) ✓

✓335 (1344A) ✓
✓338 (1346A) ✓
✓339 (1346B) ✓
✓340 (1346C) ✓
✓501 (1351B) ✓
✓492 (1354A) ✓
✓493 (1354B) ✓
✓494 (1354C) ✓
retigne 495 (1354D) Used in Shamanism
✓496 (1354E) ✓
✓497 (1354F) ✓
✓498 (1354G) ✓
✓499 (1354H) ✓
✓500 (1354I) ✓
✓502 (1354J) ✓
✓480 (1355A) retigne
✓481 (1355B) ✓
✓483 (1356A) ✓
✓484 (1356B) ✓
✓485 (1356C) ✓
✓486 (1356D) ✓
✓487 (1356E) ✓

Ie	Boas
ı	î
ɑ = but	u
A E I O U = varieties	obscures
superpositions	
ɛ	ê
ɔ = boll	
ʊ = full, or put	
ɑo =	au
ə = obscure	
	â = low
t	L
tl	L'
x̂	x·
k̂	k·
	kx = between k and k
x	x
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Chapter XI.

THE KUSIUT SOCIETY.

In view of the important part played by the kusiut society in the lives of the Bella Coola, it should have been described in an earlier part of this monograph. It does not enter into the complicated structure of social organization, but forms instead a secret, semi-religious society, which can now be commented upon as a unit in itself. The word "kusiut" is connected etymologically with "siut", the Bella Coola term for a supernatural being. Thus the meaning of the society's designation is "The Supernatural", or "The Learned", for siut has both these significances. A member of the society is likewise called a kusiut, plural, kukusiut.

The investigator learns of the existence of the society almost as soon as he begins work in Bella Coola. If he asks an Indian his name, and then further asks what type of name it is, the answer is always that it is his kusiut name, that is, the name by which he is recognized as a member of the society. Ancestral names are only used at potlatches and other ceremonial occasions, while an individual's kusiut name is the one by which he is commonly known. Moreover, for about three months of every year the Bella Coola live in an atmosphere of kusiut dances with a performance, or preparation for one, taking place almost every night. Preparation for this ceremonial season, for so it may be termed, begins four days after the September moon is full, while the actual dances begin early in November and are continued until March. During this time the kukusiut are believed to be in intimate contact with the supernatural beings, so that it is a time of grave thoughts and decorous behaviour. Even during the day-time they pass from house with grave mien, not loitering around the side-walks or indulging in frivolity; every effort is made to prevent quarrels between the members who are expected to show by their appearance and actions the gravity of the rites on which they are engaged. Night after night they assemble in whichever house the dance is taking place, and those who have performed, and are therefore most closely in touch with the supernatural, even sleep there, not returning to their wives until March. A dance usually lasts for four nights, and during that time the performer's house, in which it takes

place, is termed a nuqpik, "An Empty House." The significance of this designation is unknown.

Membership in the society depends on a duly validated ancestral prerogative to perform one of the many kusiut dances. At the present time every Bella Coola is a kusiut, even babes in arms being initiated. Formerly this was not the case. In view of the sacred and secret nature of the rites, no one was admitted until he or she had reached an age of discretion; some informants went so far as to say that the hair of an initiate must have begun to turn gray, while all agreed that no one was ever admitted until at least twenty or twenty-five years of age. Initiates were frequently still older, one informant, for example, described how her mother was past the age of child bearing before admission. It is obvious that only a member of the society could be called by a kusiut name, so the uninitiated continued to be known by the ancestral names conferred on them at infancy until they received kusiut designations. The importance of the kusiut society depends on the belief of the uninitiated in the supernatural powers of its members, and as there are now no uninitiated, it follows that the rites as carried out to-day are little more than pictures of what took place fifty years ago. Since, however, it is the aim of the Bella Coola to carry out the dances as if uninitiated persons were in attendance, and since most of my information was obtained from men who well remembered their sensations when not members of the society, it is justifiable to use the present tense throughout this chapter, and to assume the presence of a number of young men and women ignorant of the significance of the rites. Formerly, the kukusiut often had difficulty in impressing the uninitiated with their prowess and feuds with the alk were common.

Although membership in the kusiut society depended on an ancestral prerogative, yet it is essentially a democratic institution. A certain amount of wealth is necessary to validate a kusiut prerogative, but nothing comparable to that required for a potlatch. Poor men are often persons of great importance within the ranks of the society. Nor are the prerogatives regarded with the same pride that characterises ancestral rites, so that slaves are often admitted as kukusiut by their masters. An important kusiut is not esteemed by the community in the same

way as the donor of many potlatches, in fact, membership in the society brings ceremonial and semi-religious fame, not social prestige.

Powers and Functions of the Society.

Any society with secret functions can be viewed from two aspects; namely, from that of a member, and from that of a non-member. The scope of the kusiut organization can be most clearly outlined by describing first what an uninitiated person knows of it. From infancy, parents impress upon a child the supernatural powers of the kukusiut and the dangers attached to their rites. Such instruction is perhaps strongest where one, or both, of the parents is not a member as in that case he is voicing his own fears and not a mere ceremonial conviction. Steeped as every Bella Coola child is in a firm belief of the near presence of the supernatural, he easily believs the tales told him of the powers of the members of the society. He knows, for example, that if, without special invitation, he dares enter the house where a kusiut dance is taking place — at any time during the four days or more that it lasts — his x xmanoas will be drawn from him. This in itself is sufficient to deter him from prying too closely into rites of kusiut. Strangely enough, there seem always to have been differences in the teaching with respect to this deception. In Kimsquit it is believed that if an uninitiated pass between the central fire and the raised platform behind it where the dancer is usually concealed, his x xmanoas will be attracted to this material object. Even though the dancer be in another house at the time, he at once senses what has happened and asks who has lost his x xmanoas. The guilty person, believing that unless it is returned to him he will die, always admits what he has done. The dancer, accompanied by several attendant kukusiut proceeds to the raised platform, presses his cupped hands four times against it, and by sucking with his mouth pretends to draw forth the x xmanoas. But since the dancer has a direct call from his supernatural patron (1), he cannot come in contact with the uninitiated without danger to the latter, so he transfers the x xmanoas to the leg of another kusiut, who is not dancing at the time, by pressing four times. This assistant then returns it to its owner by kneading it four times into the back of his neck. The reckless uninitiated person suffers no harm, but is

more careful in future.

In Bella Coola itself it is believed that if an uninitiated person even walks close to the doorway of house during the four days, or more, that a dance is taking place, his x xmnoas is attracted to the dancer, wherever he may happen to be at the moment. Consequently the uninitiated use the beach path instead of the sidewalk. At this point the accounts differ. According to one, the dancer falls down as if dead, due to the contact of something non-sacred with the power with which he is imbued. It is at once recognised what has happened and any kusiut can draw forth it by placing his two hands, shaped like a cup, against the dancer and sucking violently. While so doing he calls "hoip" loudly and any kukusiut present beat time furiously. As soon as the alien x xmnoas has been extracted the dancer recovers. Still holding his hands cupped together, the extractor now proceeds to the house of the uninitiated and returns his x xmnoas by kneading it into the back of his head. If this were not done the loser would soon become mad, try to eat dirt, and die. According to another informant, the presence of a strange x xmnoas within his body does not inconvenience the dancer. He senses its presence, and asks who will pay for its return. Unless the owner at once steps forward to claim his property and promises to pay for its return, his x xmnoas is thrown into the fire and he dies.

It is not difficult to understand why this belief both frightens the uninitiated and impresses them with the prestige of the kukusiut.

Their respect is further increased by a belief that the kukusiut are able to witness the dances of the supernatural beings. As every Bella Coola knows, the supernatural ones perform dances of which those done by the kukusiut are mere representations. These are held in Nusmat a, which changes its name to Nuxqulxwaista for the occasion, at the same time that the earthly dances occur. In October the supernatural ones begin to gather, and many of them give their dances while awaiting the arriavl of their chief, S nhalotła, who enters at the winter solstice. The qwatłaquata of every kusiut, as well as the qwatłaquata of every living creature on this earth, ascends for these dances. Thus a part of every member of the society actually is present and can observe the sacred dances of the supernatural. Is it strange that they are regarded with awe by their less fortunate

follows? Each qwatłnusta has bodily entity and can receive its due share of the presents which are given with every dance. If the recipient is able to retain his present he has success on earth for the following year, but should he drop his winnings he will be unfortunate. Although the supernatural beings have been waiting for Alquntam, for whom the central seat behind the fire is reserved, yet as soon as he enters they rush wildly forth because he is so big and so hot that they cannot endure his near presence. The crush at the doorway as all the supernatural beings and the qwatłnusta struggle for egress at the same moment is so great that many of the latter fall; a person to whose qwatłnusta this happens never lives until the next ceremonial season. According to one account, Moaxm m (1) seizes his paddle and leaves on the instant of Alqun'am's entry, before the general chaotic exodus. It is when rushing out that many qwatłnusta drop their winnings so that their owners fail. Alquntam enters and discusses kusiut matters with S xs xkalaix, his assistant with ~~kuxt~~ respect to ~~kuxkxmxkxmf~~ his functions as leader of the supernatural kukusiut. (2). S xs xkalaix, whose name means, "The one who does not fear to speak", is referred to as "The Lawyer of Heaven"; he acts as announcer and intermediary with Alquntam, but himself lacks the power of initiating matters. The two discuss whether or not it is advisable to allow mortal kukusiut to perform certain dances of the type known as kusiot m (3), and if so they transmit the necessary power to the

(1). See page .
(2). The differences of belief of individual Bella Coola, dependent upon family traditions, is nowhere shown with greater clearness than in respect to this meeting of the leaders of the supernatural dancers. Every effort was made to obtain exact information on this point, but the writer is convinced that the Bella Coola have no uniformity of belief even in what might be regarded as fundamental concepts. Thus one informant, well versed in kusiut matters, was emphatic that there are four supernatural leaders, Alquntam, Smaiaikila, S xs xkalaix and Snus lkals, who meet the supreme deity, S nxalotła. Others were equally emphatic that Alquntam is the kusiut name ofthe supreme deity, and that S nxalotła, Smaiaikila, and Snus lkals are merely other designations for the same deity. The writer has followed this belief during the monograph, designating the supreme deity as Alquntam, the name by which he is termed with respect to his kusiut powers. These two opinions are not as fundamentally different as appears at first sight, since a man is considered as having almost two, or more, personalities with respect to different functions at which he is called by different names. Since the supreme deity is regarded as a super-man, who functions in diverse manners, it is not difficult to understand how these ~~functions~~ are sometimes ascribed to different individuals, and sometimes to the one under different names.
(3). See page .

earthly dancer thus enabling him to give a graphic representation of one of the heavenly dances.

The essence of the kusiut dances is that each portrays a dance given by one of the supernatural beings in the house in the land above. Each earthly dancer has as patron the supernatural being who performs the dance of which his own is a model. Between patron and protege there exists a close affinity which provides the latter with the power necessary to perform. To do so, the uninitiated believe that he must receive a ye x, which can be translated as "call", from his patron; it is this which sets him apart from those unfortunates who are not members of the society. Moreover, not only is each patron a supernatural being, but each is closely associated with Alqumtam in the performance of the heavenly kusiut rites, which indirectly increases the prestige of the protege.

Furthermore, throughout the ceremonial season, the uninitiated have ocular demonstrations of the powers with which the kukusiut are associated. At frequent intervals they are invited to the house of the dancer where, with wonder, fear, and awe, they see strange creatures. Although they recognize that many of these are only their fellow-tribesmen, disguised by masks, yet they have no idea of the manner in which these are made and consider them only possible by the supernatural power of the kukusiut. Moreover, they accept the strange designs of the figures as proof that the kukusiut have actually been in contact with unfamiliar beings. It seems clear that the uninitiated do not relaize that the masks are the work of human agency. Moreover, they are frequently deluded into a belief that the figures displayed are really those of supernatural patrons who have come to earth to assist their proteges. It must be remembered that these dances take place within the large houses, only partially illumined by the flickering light of the central fire. Such lighting assists deception and conjuring tricks of all kinds quite apart from the atmosphere of credulity in which the observers have been schooled from infancy.

It may be that the uninitiated are sometimes suspicious that the performers are not real supernatural beings, but there is no question of their firm confiction concerning the changes which come over the kukusiut at this time. One of

members of the society, for example, may begin to act in a peculiar manner and at once the uninitiated are ejected from the house. From without they listen with mixed fear and excitement to the strange noises which they do not know are made by whistles, and presently the kusiut rushes forth in a frenzied state biting those he meets. The uninitiated know that he is a Cannibal, doing as his patron above is doing, and that it is a call from the latter which has caused him to become mad. When the kukusiut have subdued him and taken him back to his house, the uninitiated hear more strange and inexplicable sounds, which appear to go upwards, and presently the news is circulated that the Cannibal has been carried away to the land above. He is seen no more for several weeks, and when next the uninitiated see him, he is thin, wan and bald, because the high winds of the land above have blown the hair from his head. After various rites which are inexplicable to the uninitiated except that the Cannibal actually possesses peculiar power, he is calmed and the songs are sung describing what he saw in the land above, and the dangers which he avoided there. The uninitiated shiver sympathetically, marvel at his valor, and anticipate with mixed feelings the time when they too may be privileged to have similar experiences. Or it may be that they witness the killing of one of their fellow-villagers by disemboweling, and the restoring of him to life. They know the victim; under ordinary circumstances he could not endure death any more than anyone else, hence the claim that it is because of the call given to him by his patron is accepted as an obvious fact. The uninitiated never suspect that they are victims of an elaborate conjuring deception. At all times the kukusiut are eager to impress the uninitiated with their own powers, and if it happens that a member of the society should die while in concealment, his corpse is buried secretly. The explanation given is that he has succumbed to some of the dangers to which kukusiut are exposed, a fiction readily believed in view of the absence of the usual funeral rites.

Though it is common knowledge that the ability of a kusiut to perform any extraordinary feat has its ultimate source in the performance of the same feat by his supernatural patron, yet it is equally well known that this specific power has been brought to this earth and is located in one particular spot. An ancestor must in some way have come in contact with the patron, and at that time his kusiut name,

carrying with it the prerogatives of supernatural patronage and of dancing on this earth, was deposited in a nuskasiutsta, repository (1) by the supernatural woman Ano°likwotsaix. Each nuskasiutsta is thought of as a cave, or hollow, beneath a large tree, a rock, or other distinctive natural object; to obtain his power a kusiut initiate must go to a nuskasiutsta, actual contact with a patron is unnecessary. Every kusiut prerogative has its nuskasiutsta and in each of these is Ano°likwotsaix; she is one yet capable of being simultaneously in many hundred spots, corresponding to the many hundred kusiut prerogatives. Every uninitiated person believes that if he could only have the good fortune to find a nuskasiutsta, Ano°likwotsaix would give him a name and he would at once become a kusiut. She only travels during the ceremonial season when she is present at every kusiut dance, in the form of a woman with a long, thin face and pointed chin who "explains" the significance of the figures to the uninitiated in a peculiar high-pitched voice. Frequently she mocks the uninitiated:

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" she jeers. "You (naming some ambitious youth), you who think yourself so smart, you nearly fell over me that time you walked up in the woods behind the village looking for grouse. If I had been a bear I could have felled you with a blow of my paw. How can you ever hope to bevome a kusiut like your faher and grandfather if you are so blind."

His fellows are inclined to join in the laughter at their one singled out for Ano°likwotsaix's corn, but she flays them all in turn. "She" is, of course, a kusiut chosen for fluency and ability to make biting remarks. Parents tell their children that in the autumn, pleased at the sight of falling leaves, Ano°likwotsaix bares the roof of her house and sits shaking her fingers like a dancer.

"Go in the woods and look for her", they say. "If she sees you she will say 'tc t' and beckon to you. Then you will become a kusiut."

To further this deception, kukusiut are accustomed to disguise themselves as Ano°likwotsaix and move around in the forest, taking care that no uninitiated comes sufficiently near to discover them. An individual may have seve al kusiut prerogatives, and if he wishes to transfer one of these to one of his fellows, the report is circulated that the recipient has stumbled upon the nuskasiutsta of the

(1). Nuskasiutsta, also called nuskiinsta.

donor. The latter then acts as if he were crazy, and the uninitiated are told that he is a nukaxem, an untranslatable word with the significance of a "One who has suffered loss through faulty concealment (of his nuskasiutsta)."

According to Kimsquit belief, Ano°likwotsaix has a husband who dwells with her in every nuskasiutsta. His name is Almoq±taikila. If an uninitiated person should chance to find a nuskasiutsta, he falls dead from the power emanating from Ano°likwotsaix. Her husband then restores the dead by violently blowing on the back of the victims neck, accompanying this with cries of "Oip". When a person is initiated into the kusiut society the uninitiated hear the songs used, in many of which are references to the experiences of the novice with this supernatural pair.

Turning now to the manner in which the kukusiut regard their own society, it is evident that the most important function of each member is to aid in impressing and deceiving the uninitiated. The prestige of the society rests upon the ability of its members to inspire awe, hence any weakness in fulfilling this obligation is an anti-social act. For this purpose the society acts as a whole. Many kukusiut have, for examole, Cannibal prerogatives, and on occasi ns the Cannibals may work together for the good of the society as a whole, but they do not form a separate organisation of their own. The Bella Coola believe this to be a Kwakiutl custom. Many of the means employed to deceive and impress the uninitiated have already been described. Mythology records, and it appears to be a fact, that long ago the ascendancy of the kukusiut was often challenged by the a lk and other uninitiated. But at the time of the coming of the white man the society had reached a position of eminence so that the powers of its members was unquestioned. Moreover, the combined strength of virtually all the seniors of the tribe was so great that an uninitiated person could not assert himself even if he was suspicious.

Although the members of the society exert every effort to conceal their subterfuges, yet it sometimes happens that an uninitated person, or persons, sees or hears something which he should not know. The simplest way to deal with this situation is to kill the observer. For example, it was only a few years ago that a young man, impelled by curiosity, wandered up a valley into which he had been warned that

not to penetrate. Here he met a Cannibal whom he believed had vanished into the upper realms. Almost dumbfounded, he accepted the latter's invitation to sit down, but the Cannibal was waiting his opportunity and slew the man. More often, and especially if the observer is the child of a kusiut, he is initiated into the ranks of the society. If this happens at any time of year except the actual ceremonial season, it is obvious that he cannot dance immediately, but instead he is taken to the secret meeting place of the village chiefs, and there the mysteries of the organisation are explained to him. To add to the impressiveness of the affair, news is circulated that the observer has had a shaman's experience. With the aid of the older kukusiut he then performs a dance and conjuring feat of the type described in the account of shamanism, and is secluded until the next autumn while wearing the distinctive collar of a shaman. In the songs used on this occasion no mention is made of a wash-basin, so of course the "shaman" only performs ceremonially.

It is somewhat difficult to understand and explain the sentiments which lead the young man to obey the dictates of the senior kukusiut in deceiving his former childhood friends. If it becomes known that a young man has seen something which should have been concealed, the senior kukusiut of his village meet in their ceremonial spot and decide that he must be put through the shaman's rite. Some realtive of the youth is always ready to provide the necessary kusiut prerogative, as otherwise he would have to be killed. Two or three members are then sent to catch the young man. On some pretext they lure him into the woods and then carry him away, struggling in fear, to the holy of holies, the place where he had been warned that he would die if he penetrated. Here he finds all the seniors of his village, seated with grave expressions on their faces. In spite of what he may have seen, the lad cannot rid himself of the supernatural fears with which he has been inculcated from childhood, and the experience is terrifying to a degree. It may be that he has seen some of the whistles, and thereby learnt that the strange sounds are made by men, not by the supernatural ones. In this case he is shown their mechanism in detail, and warned of the dire fate which will befall him if he tells others of his knowledge. Fear impels him to silence, and at the same time he realises

how the knowledge which is now his has placed him in a superior position to that of his former associates. Moreover, he feels that he has been admitted into the ranks of the society in which his father, grandfather, and ancestors have distinguished themselves, and that it would be desecration to make light of what hm they have held sacred. Finally, an initiate does not at first grasp the fact that all the rites are deceitful, and by the time that this becomes apparent to him he has reached a position in which it is to his social advantage to continue the deceit since hm he feels himself as one of a band bound together in a semi-religious community of thought and acti n. At any rate, the existence of the society proves that these varied motives operate so strongly that a young man does keep silence.

The kukusiut are always ready to deal with a diaster such as sometimes occurs in spite of every precaution. About one hundred and fifty year ago when a dance was taking place at the village of Nuqaxmats a masked figure, who was representing one of the supernatural beings, had the misfortune to drop his mask, the strings by which it was tied have some way become worn through. The house was crowded with uninitiated to hom the deception at once became apparent. For a moment there was wild confusion, but the senior kukusiut rose to the occasion and closed the door, allowing no ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ uninitiated person to leave. Then a kusiut was sent out with a whistle which he sounded as if the supernatural being of which it was the voice was growing nearer and nearer, till finally a thump was heard on the roof.

"O ", cried out the kukusiut, "it is my patron."

The uniniti ted were told that in consequence of the disaster, all the supernatural beings had sent calls to this earth, and that consequently each person within the house was a kusiut. Even small children were so initiated on this occasion. Those whose relatives were kukusiut and had dormant prerogatives at once explained to their relatives that the call was from the patron of that particular prerogative, and that henceforth the person addressed was a protege of that being. But even with the assistance of all the kukusiut there were not sufficient prerogatives for all who had seen the disaster. ~~Itxxxxxxxxxx

his ancestral name had come as patron. Repositories were stated to exist in various places near the village for the names so created, and by morning peace had been restored. The writer was told of this event by so many informants that it seems certain it was an historical event. Those so initiated were said to have become "kukusiut under easy circumstances", and had as prerogatives only the right of singing of their respective patrons, but not performing any particular ceremony. The influence and prestige of the society can be judged from the fact that it was able to carry out such a wholesale initiation without its wholesale deceptions becoming known in adjacent villages. The desire to become a kusiut with consequent ability to impress one's fellows is a lure sufficiently strong to impose silence on the most daring uninitiated.

Another means by which the kukusiut protect themselves from doubting uninitiated is by the use of spies. The marshals (1) of the society select some intelligent youth and ask the consent of his father, or other guardian, to make him a spy. If this is granted, the youth is lured into the woods and then carried away forcibly to the sacred meeting-place where he finds the senior kukusiut of his village seated, an awe-inspiring band. They explain to him the deceits used, show him the whistles and other regalia, and instruct him that it is his duty to inform them if he hears any uninitiated person casting doubts on the powers of the society. Proud of his trust, and fearful of what would happen should he fail to carry out his duties, the spy begins his work. Ignorant of his knowledge, the uninitiated have no hesitation in talking with him and if he hears one of them expressing doubts as to the powers of the society he at once notifies one of the marshals. The overconfident uninitiated is then made a member of the society. Thus the kukusiut are constantly recruiting their strength from the most intelligent uninitiated, thereby both adding to the influence of their society and lessening the dangers from non-members.

Sometimes a spy is forced to undertake the task on account of too great knowledge of kusiut matters. The following incident is worth recording as a concrete example of this matter.

Although every kusiut assists in preserving the dignity and awe of the society, yet this duty is especially the function of those members of the society who are regarded as the earthly representatives of Ano°likwotsaix. They may be termed marshals of the society. Each must ~~ha~~ have an ancestral prerogative ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ for this, duly validated by presents, in addition to a kusiut prerogative of some kind. In each village there are four or five of these men. Whenever food is being served at a kusiut dance, the marshals receive theirs first and then one or other of them addresses ~~xddressxxxhe~~ audience in slow and impressive style, beating on the floor with a stick to add emphasis to his words. He admonishes them to safeguard the ancient rites of the society, to be bold, to be secretive, and pays honor to the member who has given the dance. It is they who take the leading part if a youth is dragged away to the meeting-place for initiation, and it is they who arrange matters ~~x~~ when a spy reports that an uninitiated is over-inquisitive. Moreover, if any member of the society should break a law of the society at a time when no uninitiated are present, the marshal is expected to seize a burning stick from the fire and strike the offender with it. If death should result, revenge is unthinkable, since the criminal had broken the law. The same fate is unhesitatingly meted out to any kusiut who should dare to betray any of the mysteries to the uninitaited. Moreover, it is the marshals who decide whether any improper act lowers the dignity of a kusiut dance and punish accordingly. Not many years ago a kusiut woman gave birth to a child while a dance was taking place and the infant was slain by one of the marshals. The usual explanation made to the uninitiated for a death within the dance-house is that the roof fell and slew the victim, ~~with the impression that the breakage was caused by a supernatural beingx caused the~~ roof to fall and kill the victim.

Each marshal has, in connection with his prerogative of this vocation, a professional name, used only within the house where a kusiut dance is takin place and carefully concealed from the uninitiated. Each name was derived from ~~an revelation of an ancestor of the holder~~ obtained ~~xyxxx~~ from Ano°likwotsaix by an ancestor of the holder. This is believed by the kukusiut themselves and is one of the reasons for their obedience to the marshals. ~~xxxxxxfxtxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Some names were obtained from Ano°likwotsaix by an ancestor of the possessor, others were created on this earth with reference to some specific event, and duly made valid by presents to the

kukusiut alone. Some of these names are:

Nwots kmis: "The Destroyer", so given on account of an elaborate kusiut ritual which failed.

N mutsta: meaning unknown.

"The One who Guards the Ritual by Gripping with his Teeth."

"The Terrifier."

"The Dog-Toothed One."

When a kusiut ~~kmxxksxthxxkxxxxxfxthxxxxxxxxty~~ commits an act contrary to the interests of the society the marshals meet in the sacred meeting-place of the village, with other senior kukusiut. There is no definite order respecting who shall or shall not be summoned. The matter is discussed until unanimity of opinion is reached, although a marshal, particularly if he is also a rich and influential chief, is the guiding spirit. In Kusqulxwaista the supernatural being Sikilikta n kills any supernatural kusiut who errs, so in this world it is alwys said that a verdict of death has been made by this being. Several of those at the meeting are sent out to lure the victim who, brought before the group, is ~~kxixxxxxxkixxhxx~~ told that he is to die. He is seized, thrown on his back and a pole laid across his neck; two men sit on each end until the victim is dead. Sometimes less drastic punishments are meted out. A few years ago, when the influence of the white man had become evident on the coast, a dancer had been, theoretically, disemboweled and was supposed to remain for months within his house to recover from the operation. Instead he insisted on fleeing to Kimsquit to a woman with whom he was in love. When he returned to Bella Coola a meeting was held to decide whether he should be killed. Fear of the white men prevented this, but the ~~xhxx~~ marshals insisted that the offender submit himself to periodic scratching on the stomach with a nail so that it would appear to the uninitiated that he was suffering from a deep ~~xxd~~ wound. The offender was thankful to escape thus lightly.

Frequently the marshals and associated kukusiut deputed others to act as their executioners. Sometimes a shaman who was also a kusiutwas asked to slay the offender, or a kusiut in whose ancestral family a knowledge of means of secret murder had been handed down for generations. The executioner was told that if he failed he

would himself be killed. Although no Bella Coola would admit that a person so charged committed murder by other than magical means, it appears highly probable that this was the case. It is believed that long ago the kukusiut were able to kill offending uninitiated person by drawing forth his x xnanoas, wrapping it in undyed cedar-bark and casting it into the fire. The victim then died shortly.

The desire to carry out kusiut ceremonials with proper dignity and ritual not only acts as a strong bond of union between the members of the society in a single village, but between members of the society in different villages and even in different tribes. When a marshal has struck a kusiut t e ceremony, whatever it may be khat is at once stopped. Two kukusiut are sent off to bear the tidings to the adjacent village up the valley, and two more to the adjacent village down the valley. Since it is the ceremonial season, a dance is taking place in one house, and the messengers go beneath this and knock on the floor of the back-room. Someone jears them in time and a kusiut goes out to investigate. When the messengers have told their tale he returns, whispers to the singers, and the ceremony concludes for that night. As soon as the uninitaited, if any are present, have been ejected the messengers enter with blankets almost covering their faces and seat themselves between the fire and the back-room where the senior kukusiut crowd arround to listen. From this village two more kukusiut members are despatched as messengers, and so the news is transmitted with remarkable speed from end to end of the valley. When next the marshals are admonishing the kukusiut of their respective villages, they do not fail to draw attention to the way in which the law has been upheld. Conversely, if a marshal hear indirectly that there has been a flaw in the ritual of aneighbouring village, he beats in the fire with his stick, and expresses the hope that the name of the marshal in the village where the error took place may be blackened unless he does better.

As an individual kusiut who errs is punished by a marshal, so is punishment meted out to the mebers of a village in which any serious disaster occurs during a dance. Such disasters are fire, causing concealed kukusiut to appear among the uninitaited, the breaking of the side-walk on which a number of kuksuiut are dancing, or the capsizing of lashed canoes such as are used in some of the dances.

The obvious effect is to lower the prestige of the kusiut society in the eyes of the uninitiated. The news travels from town to town, and to adjacent tribes. This is a casus belli for any village which wishes to attack the one where the disaster took place, in fact, a raid is considered meritorious. Owing to the frequency of marriages between the members neighbouring villages, it usually happens that the inhabitants of adjacent settlements are unwilling to attack, but the news spreads until it reaches a village willing to bear the brunt. The marshals, aided by any other influential kukuoiut, discuss the matter and decide on war; uninitiated are called upon to take part, though ~~without knowing the nature of the~~ they are only told that the war is connected with the rites of the kus ut society which increases rather than decreases their awe. The inhabitants of the threatened village know that an attack is inevitable and set out guards and sentinels. If possible they flee at the last moment to neighbouring towns, knowing that they will not be pursued, and allowing the raiders to burn their village and carry off loot. If a fight takes place many people may be killed, but slaves are never taken. Not many years ago the x attacked Alaiard, aided by a number of Chilcotin to whom they were related but who had not the slightest idea of the cause of the raid. Although an attacked town is usually helped by its neighbours, this is not the case when a raid is caused by error in kusiut or a nusk ceremonial.

Nor is punishment for error x or disaster in ritual ~~inflicted~~ meted out only by members of the same tribe. The Bella Coola firmly believe that if, for example, there is a serious disaster at Qeraqo tc, that village will be raided by the people of Bella Bella, Fort Rupert, Kitkatla, or even tribes further away. News of the accident as reaches Tal io or Kimsquit and the inhabitants, themselves related by blood to the offenders and therefore unwilling to punish them, call upon the members of a foreign tribe to punish them. On different occasions this statement was made to the writer by six independent informants, so there appears to be not the slightest doubt as to Bella Coola belief in this law. But when specific cases were asked for, they could not be obtained. It therefore appears clear that the Bella Coola, probably owing to long residing on the part of the kitamat, believe that an error in ritual is sufficient to bring punishment from an alien tribe. There must be

some basis of truth for this making conviction, and the writer believes that the kusiut must have taken advantage of raids to explain to the uninitiated that these were caused by disasters in ritual. One informant was of the opinion that on one occasion when a house collapsed at Kimsquit during a Cannibal dance, a Bella Coola chief called upon Te b ea, chief of the Xixaitla, who raided Kimsquit in punishment. Quite apart from the belief inculcated to the uninitiated, it is quite probable that tribes eager for war sometimes made this a pretext of a disaster. The Bella Coola know of no case in which they raided a foreign tribe for this reason, although they say that if a tribe is called upon to set up a pole, it must refuse to function.

Leaving now the functions of the society as a whole, the rights of each individual member can next be described. Each kusiut has:

1. A KUSIUT NAME. Like every other prerogative, a name of this type can be acquired from father, uncle, grandfather, or other relative, or even sometimes pass from mother to son. As a rule a kusiut wills his name, or names for a man may have several of these, before death and his wishes are observed. Although the cost of validating such a prerogative is less than a potlatch, yet a Cannibal dance, for example, entails considerable expenditure, so that a man entitled to give such a ceremony frequently lends his right to another. Like other lent prerogatives, failure to return such a loan is a frequent cause of feud. During a man's lifetime he often gives away his kusiut name-prerogative, and if he should give away all of them, he becomes legally an uninitiated. In such a case it is customary for his wife, or some relative, to give him a new kusiut prerogative.

2. A PATRON, sisnututs. Little need be said on this point. The texts of the songs used by the dancer describe his patron, always couched in mystical terms for the benefit of the uninitiated. If the patron performs any type of dance at the gathering of the supernatural beings above, so can his protege perform on this earth, otherwise his power is limited to using his patron in song. It sometimes happens that a single individual inherits prerogatives with the same patron from two different relatives, he can merge these to give a composite dance, with consequent addi-

tional power. Or one individual may be the fortunate owner of several prerogatives with different patrons. Although most kukusiut have only one prerogative, yet two or three are not uncommon and the riter knows of one case in which a man had six distimct patrons. The uninitiated believe that from any one of these may come the call giving him the power to perform.

3. A REPOSITORY. In this subterranean shelter his name remains, guarded by Ano°likwotsaix. An individual who has several prerogatives has several of these, one for each.

Although the kukusiut are aware that much of their ritual is only deception, yet it is clear that they believe in the supernatural origin of their rites, and that their ancestors actaully had the powers which their descendants of to-day imitate. Each kusiut prerogative has had one of three origins:

A. It was brought down from above by the first people. Before coming to this earth each of them saw in the land above his patron who instructed him in a type of dance, and told him where his repository on this world would be. It is assumed that the earliest men were in contact with all the supernatural beings before coming to this earth, yet it is believed that each was "blind" to the patron of his fellows, and thus had only one patron.

B. It was derived from an experience with one of the supernatural beings on this world. In this case the repository was either at a spot indicated by the apparition, or at the actual scene of the vision.

C. A powerful chief sometimes altered an ancestral name to a kusiut name. It is believed that this occurred comparatively frequently in ancient times when chiefs had semi-supernatural power. In such cases he used his own inclination in choice of patron, and usually made his own repository within his house, giving strength to it by the killing of a slave and burial there. Although several Bella Coola informants described this, Kimsquit Indians denied that it could ever have taken place. They say that all repositories were long ago dug by Nunudjixm m, a male supernatural being sent down by Alqumtam at the beginning of time to prepare the habitations of Ano°likwotsaix and her husband. After doing this,

he returned to the land above where he has since resided.

It will thus be seen that the prerogative of a kusiut is always derived from some experience of an ancestor. Thus in carrying out the rite, the dancer feels that he is continuing the works of his forbears, a factor which increases his desire that no x error or carelessness on his part shall dim the prestige of the society before the uninitaited. And further a man who has spent years in deceiving, undoubtedly begins to convince himself that he is different from lesser mortals.

Before describing in deatil initiation into the kusiut society, and then the ritual of various dances, it will be convenient to outline the type of ceremonial, although emphasizing that each differs so much from every other one that lengthy descriptions will be necessaryx later on. When a person has been initiated, either in the proper manner during the ceremonial season or as a "shaman" during the summer, he is known as a ts x, novice, until the kusiut dances of the next winter. During this period he wears certain distinctive cedar bark ornaments and is expected to keep himself someway apart from the uninitiated. He is always required to give his ceremonial during the first dance season after initiation. In later years a kusiut can suit himself whether or not to perform. Having once done so, he is a fully qualified member of the society, nor does he increase hisx rank in direct proportion to the number of his ceremonies. It is true that one who often dances hears himself praised by the marshals, and gains a certain amount of fame among his fellow kukusiut. But no matter how often he may perform, he cannot become a chief, with fame spread far and wide among neighbouring tribes, nor can he increase the fame of his ancestors by adding lustre to his ancestral names. Thus the benefits are not sufficient to urge a man to concentrate on kusiut ceremonials in preference to potlatches. The society is essentially one in which a relatively poor man can display his semi-religious prerogative equally with a chief. Usually a man performs a complicated ritual, such as that of a Cannibal dance, three of four times during his lifetime, less onerous dances in which no dramatic theme is presented may be more often given. A man who proposes to give a dance must always notify one of the marshals of his village, who summons his fellows, and some of the senior members of the society, as well as chiefs who are also kukusiut, to discuss

the intention. If it entails one of the more difficult dramatic presentations in which failure would lead to the uninitiated learning the mysteries of the society, the matter is debated at length. The writer was present at one meeting held for this purpose, with regard to the performance of a rite which had not been carried out for over thirty years. An air of solemnity graced the proceedings, as if each present relaised[1] the gravity of the topic. The prospective dancer explained what he wished to do, then anyone was at liberty to comment. Most of those present took advantage of it, the marshals speaking last of all. The influence of each speaker depended in part on the type of kusiut dance which he himslef had given, and in part on his general status in the community as chief or otherwise, an intangible matter ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ dependent on public estimation rather than upon functional rights. In this case it was soon decided that tha dancer could proceed with his arrangements. But if there is doubt as to his ability, the marshals have no hestitation in prohibiting his intended performance, and they often do so later on if rehearsals show that it is unlikely to be successful.

Refusal of permission to perform ~~xx~~ only occurs in case of the more difficult dances, which include the Cannibal, Scratch, Breaker, Kanan i and ~~Kxxxixxxx~~ Kusiut Kusiot m. Those members of the society who have prerogatives of one of these types are considered as having greater importance than persons whose prerogatives consist merely in singing of some minor deity-patron. Yet each is equally a member of the kusiut society, which is not graded according to the prerogatives of its members.

Many of these more difficult dances require weeks of preparation, when it is sometimes said that the dancer has disappeared to heaven. When he returns they usually conclude in four nights, which is the time taken by dances of a simpler type. Each of these nights is known by an untranslatable term, and as it will be necessary to use these throughout, it may assist the reader to give a summary of the ritual ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ which takes place on them. It can be assumed that it is a simple dance, that is, one without elaborate preliminaries.

The first night is ts xtalaix or ts xtamem. This is when the call comes to a prospective dancer. At once the uninitiated are ejected from his house, he withdraws to a hastily erected platform enclosure between the fire and the back-room, or to